

REPORT

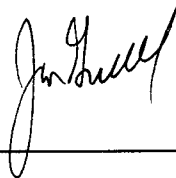
DATE: November 10, 2004, 2004

TO: Administration Committee and Regional Council

FROM: Heather Copp, Chief Financial Officer
(213) 236-1804, copp@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Correction to RC Approved Travel Policy

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:




RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve

BACKGROUND: The Regional Council adopted a revised Travel Policy at the September 2, 2004 meeting. The revisions addressed use of Web fares, hotel rates at SCAG functions and use of Federal per-diem rates for out of state travel.

Staff recently discovered that the version of the Travel Policy included in the September agenda inadvertently left out two sections from the existing travel policy:

- **An expanded section on provisions for emergency travel.** Changes to those paragraphs are indicated either by ~~strikethrough~~ or **bold** on pages 2 and 3 of the attached Travel Policy.
- **A section addressing reimbursing staff who normally use public transit or car-pooling on days when they must use their car.** Changes to those paragraphs are indicated either by ~~strikethrough~~ or **bold** on pages 4 and 5 of the attached Travel Policy.

FISCAL IMPACT: No additional impact as this has been the policy in place. 

Travel Policy and Guidelines.

Welcome to the Travel Policy Section. This section provides policy and guideline information associated with your official business travel. It is the policy of SCAG to maintain an accountable travel plan. An accountable travel policy satisfies four key requirements: (1) business related, (2) substantiation of expenses, (3) return of unspent amounts, and (4) timeliness. We recommend that staff use the most cost-effective choice (considering both direct expense as well as staff time) when incurring reimbursable travel expenses. Actual travel costs shall be considered reasonable and allowable, to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by operations as a result of SCAG's policy.

AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL

Travel, other than mileage only travel, must be approved and authorized by management before the travel begins. A travel authorization (TA) form, <http://www.scag.ca.gov/formbank/>, must be filled out and signed by the staff member. The staff member is responsible for providing the date and purpose of the travel, WBS number, and the estimated cost of transportation, hotel, meals, and other costs, which may arise. The staff member must also verify the available budget. When the TA form is completed and submitted to the manager and director for review, approval, and authorization, the cost will be encumbered against the travel budget. Manager/Director approval must be conditioned on available budget in the appropriate work element.

MILEAGE RATE CONDITIONS

The mileage rate of reimbursement for private vehicle usage is \$.34 cents per mile. Mileage claimed is supported by a statement of description of travel expenses containing a description of the beginning and ending destination points. See Less than or greater than 24 hours travel for rules.

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Policy requires employees to use the method of transportation, which is in the best interest of SCAG.

AIRLINE AND CAR RENTAL

SCAG participates in a travel Program. The program allows SCAG to use the State approved Travel Agency, Patterson Travel and use of a Business Travel Account through American Express. Patterson has assigned an individual Business Travel Account Number (BTN) through American Express to SCAG staff members who frequently travel. Do not let anyone else use your number. Additionally, each Department has been assigned a group BTN for other staff use. Each Department's Senior Administrative Assistant will be responsible for the group's BTN number and for the handling of the travel arrangements. The BTN number is only valid with Patterson Travel Agency; this is not a regular American Express credit card.

- ☐ Employees are required to use the SCAG official travel agency. Failure to use the official travel agency may result in traveling employees securing non-refundable flights or flights purchased for greater than the SCAG reimbursable rate. Employees are liable for any amounts paid over the SCAG official contract rate. Employees may request the web-rate from Patterson Travel and determine if it is the most economically feasible. The web-rate is usually non-refundable and possibly non-transferable. Please consider when making a reservation.
- ☐ Employees are required to complete the SCAG 's Travel Authorization (TA) form. If you need an estimated cost of travel to complete your TA form, you may obtain it by contacting Patterson Travel Consultant at 1-800-353-3565 or (916) 929-3661
- ☐ Once your TA is approved, complete the Patterson Travel **ResFAX** form (see form attached). The ResFAX form and your TA form must be fax/e-mail , by the department's Senior Administrative Assistant, to Patterson Travel .FAX: (916) 9255-1509 or (916) 925-0873
- ☐ Please ensure that the following information is provided to the travel consultant:
 - Your name (Person making the arrangement)
 - Traveler name(s)
 - Date(s) of travel

- Origin and destination of your air travel
 - Preferred airline and flight numbers (if known)
 - Departure and/or arrival times desired
 - Car rental needs
 - Special ticket delivery instructions, if any
 - Advise if you already have a reservation and are making a change
- ❑ After Patterson travel has completed your travel reservation, the itinerary will be faxed or e-mailed within 48 hours. The itinerary will include all the travel information required for your trip and a **confirmation number**. If you have not received your confirmation within 48 hours, please contact Patterson Travel
- ❑ Car Rentals: Employees needing a car rental during the trip will indicate this on the Patterson ResFAX form. Patterson Travel will reserve the rental car approved under our contract. Employees who operate vehicles on official business must have a valid California driver's license.
- ❑ **Changes and Cancellations:** If your entire trip or a portion of your trip needs to be cancelled, Patterson must be notified as soon as possible preferably by e-mail. Unused airline tickets and unused ticketless flight reservations must be cancelled within 24 hours after the flight time as this is considered a prepayment and will not be refunded unless cancelled. **They should NOT be traded in or held for future flights except in the case of flights booked using the web rates.** If you were issued a refundable paper ticket, return it to Patterson Travel for processing. In the event of a schedule change by a provider regarding a reservation, Patterson will notify the appropriate SCAG contact immediately. In most cases, a schedule change does not require any modification to existing tickets, however, if this is not the case, you will be notified by the Patterson Consultant.
- ~~Emergency Travel: Emergency travel, other than mileage, will require the approval of a Director. An example of this would be the situation when the original traveler is unable to make the trip and decides to send another staff member in his/her place. Patterson charges a fee for this service; therefore, it is only to be used in emergency travel situations. Emergency travel should be made through Patterson's after hour service and not directly with the airlines. These arrangements should be made by contacting (800) 823-9188, indicate your are traveling on SCAG business~~
- ❑ **Note: only the Patterson BTN will secure the SCAG contract rate.**

Note: Employees may view booked itineraries on line at www.viewtrip.com. You will need your Passenger Name Record Locator. The Record Locator is on all itineraries located on the top-left side of the invoice. From viewtrip.com, you will also be able to view FlightTracker. FlightTracker will give you the current status of any flights between major cities within the United States and Canada.

EMERGENCY TRAVEL

Emergency travel, other than mileage, will require the approval of a Director. An example of this would be the situation when the original traveler is unable to make the trip and decides to send another staff member in his/her place. Patterson charges a fee for this service; therefore, it is only to be used in emergency travel situations. Emergency travel should be made through Patterson's after hour service and not directly with the airlines. These arrangements should be made by contacting (800) 823-9188, indicate your are traveling on SCAG business

Emergency Travel After Normal Business Hours:

Patterson Travel's normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM Pacific time. They are closed on New Years day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas day and the day after Christmas. Travel reservations or changes to the existing travel reservations during after hours or holidays can only be made by calling Patterson Travel's following emergency/after hours phone number:

(800) 823-9188

The following is the procedure for emergency travel after normal business hours:

Initiating New Travel Reservations - After Hours

Only the following four SCAG staff members are authorized to initiate new travel requests for themselves after normal business hours:

The Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the Manager of Governmental Affairs, and the Secretary to the Regional Council for Regional Council Officers.

The Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director are the only persons authorized to initiate new travel after hours for all other personnel. This procedure shall not be used to circumvent approval of SCAG TA prior to making a trip.

SCAG's TA form will not be required to initiate new travel after normal business hours. However, immediately upon completing the travel, a SCAG TA must be completed and approved to comply with the normal travel procedure. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed unless a TA has been completed.

Initiating changes to the Travel Plan During the Trip – After Hours

If changes to the travel plans are required anytime during the trip after normal business hours for any reason, Patterson Travel shall be contacted using the above referenced toll free phone number. They will make the necessary changes to your travel plan in the most cost-effective manner to get you to your destination.

The State of California has a contract with multiple airlines for travel with-in the State of California. Patterson Travel will have the liberty to switch your reservation to any the other contracted airline (if necessary) in the event of a missed flight, lost connection, etc. In the event it requires you to spend an extra night due to a missed flight for any reason, Patterson Travel will make every effort to switch your reservation to a non-contracted airline if no other flight is available with the contracted airline, on the same day. Any changes to your travel plans must be made by Patterson Travel to obtain proper refund or credit to SCAG's account.

For travel outside of California, currently the State of California has a contract with only United Airlines, which will make it difficult to switch your reservation to any other airline. If traveling outside of the State of California and you need to change your travel plans, Patterson Travel will find a reservation with a contracted airline. The only time Patterson Travel will switch your reservation to a non-contracted airline is if they are unable to find a reservation on the contracted airline on the same day, forcing the traveler to spend an extra night.

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION-OTHER

- ☐ Private vehicle: Employees who operate private vehicles on official business must have an actual California driver's license and appropriate auto insurance. Reimbursement will be based on mileage.
- ☐ Rental car: Reservations must be made through Patterson Travel Agency. The contracted rate used is for a compact vehicle. Vehicle upgrades must be justified and have supervisor's approval. Travelers are encouraged to refuel gas tanks prior to returning vehicles. Receipts for fuel purchase shall be submitted with your Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form.
- ☐ Public transportation
- ☐ A taxi should only be used if it is the best alternative when evaluating cost/time
- ☐ A taxi must not be used between home and SCAG.
- ☐ Reimbursement is not allowed for motorcycle, private plane, or boat use.

SHORT TERM TRAVEL ASSIGNMENTS

Policy:

When the following conditions are met, short-term lodging and meals may be allowed if travel is:

- No more than 30 calendar days
- At least 50 miles away from staff's headquarters and residence

Lodging Rates:

a) Actual up to \$84.00, Statewide, plus taxes and surcharges Exception: If there is a SCAG Board function that an employee must attend and the hotel rate exceeds the SCAG allowable rate, the Executive Director can authorize the amount of the lodging that exceeds the SCAG allowable rate to be paid out of the general fund.

b) Actual up to \$110.00, plus taxes and surcharges, in the following counties:

- Los Angeles County
- San Diego County

c) Actual up to \$140.00, plus taxes and surcharges in the following counties:

- Alameda County
- San Francisco County
- Santa Clara County
- San Mateo County

d) For out-of-state travel, actual costs up to the Federal rates for out of state lodging, plus taxes and surcharges. Per the Federal per diem policy, if an employee is staying at a hotel where the conference is being held and the conference rate exceeds the Federal out of state lodging rate, reimbursement can be made for the higher rate if pre-approved by SCAG's Deputy Director and is in accordance with the Federal policy. Reference www.policyworks.gov, for Federal per diem rates.

Meal and Incidental Rates

The reimbursement of meals and incidentals has both a time and monetary restraint; both conditions must be documented and met. An employee may not claim meal reimbursement when the meal is furnished to the employee or otherwise paid for. **Note: Alcoholic beverage purchases are not reimbursed.**

Meal and Incidental Rates and Mileage Requirements-Travel Less Than 24 Hours

Breakfast cost

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 6:00 a.m., and ends at or after 9:00 a.m., you may claim the actual amount of your breakfast up to **\$6.00**.

Lunch cost

Lunch and incidentals **are not to be claimed** for trips less than 24 hours.

Dinner cost

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 4:00 p.m., and ends at or after 7:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your dinner up to **\$18.00**.

Incidental costs

Incidentals **cannot** be claimed for trips less than 24 hours.

Mileage

~~Mileage is reimbursed for actual miles traveled in excess of round trip distance from home to work.~~

An employee traveling in his or her own private vehicle shall be reimbursed at the rate of \$.34 cents per mile for those miles incurred while conducting official SCAG business. Reimbursement on a per mile rate is intended to cover all costs of operating the travelers personal automobile including gasoline, oil, insurance, repairs etc. (exclusive of tolls and parking).

Employees working on weekends, holidays, or their regularly scheduled day off (under a 9/80 work schedule) may claim mileage reimbursement for the round trip from home to SCAG. Also, the employee shall be entitled to reimbursement for downtown parking.

The traveler must have a valid California Driver License and the proper automobile insurance coverage required by the State of California.

Mileage shall be reimbursed in one of two ways, depending on the travelers' regular mode of commute to SCAG:

1. Rail/transit rider or carpooler – Reimbursement will be for each mile driven. Also, if travel to the 818 Building is necessary on the day of the outside meeting, reimbursement will be provided for downtown parking.
2. Private vehicle commuter – Reimbursement for mileage will be for those miles in excess of the travelers' regular commuting miles to SCAG.
Example: Charlie regularly drives his car between home and work. The daily round trip is 50 miles. If Charlie attends an outside meeting and the total miles driven are 70 miles, Charlie will be reimbursed for 20 miles. If Charlie attends a mid-day meeting, returns to SCAG and incurs an additional parking charge that additional parking charge and the miles traveled to and from the meeting are reimbursable.

Request for reimbursement must be made on SCAG's Mileage Expense Claim form. Original receipt for toll and/or parking is required for full reimbursement.

Meal and Incidental Rates and Mileage Requirements-Travel More Than 24 Hours (or Last fractional Part)

Breakfast cost

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 6:00 a.m., and ends at or after 8:00 a.m., you may claim the actual amount of your breakfast up to **\$6.00**.

Lunch cost

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 11:00 a.m., and ends at or after 2:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your lunch cost up to **\$10.00**

Dinner cost

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 4:00 p.m., and ends at or after 7:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your dinner cost up to **\$18.00**.

Incidentals

After each 24-hour period, you may claim the actual amount of your incidental cost up to **\$6.00**

The term "incidental expenses" includes, but is not limited to, expenses for laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing, and fees and tips for services, such as porters and baggage carriers. The term does not include taxicab fares, lodging taxes, or the cost of telegrams or telephone calls.

Mileage

Mileage is reimbursed for actual miles traveled.

Meal and Incidental Rates and Requirements-Travel More Than 24 Hours

There is **no travel time test** for a 24 hour travel day (i.e. If you begin your travel on Tuesday, return from your travel on Thursday, Wednesday is considered a 24 hour travel day, therefore the cost of meals and incidentals are reimbursable up to their respective dollar limit).

Note: For out-of-state travel, meals and incidentals rates are the same as the California rate

TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Policy and Guidelines

The policy requires the reimbursement request for travel related expenses be submitted within 60 days after you incur the expenses. There are two forms (Travel less than 24 hours and Travel greater than 24 hours) which may be used to reimburse travel expenses. These forms are accessed www.scag.ca.gov/formbank. The employee and the approving manager are responsible for ensuring the travel budget is adequate to cover the travel amounts claimed. Before approving the reimbursement, the manager or director must review the expenditures and validate the amounts against the budget.

- ☐ The travel expense reimbursement form shall either be typewritten or in ink and properly itemized. You must attach the Travel Authorization form to the travel expense reimbursement form.
- ☐ Receipts, **originals only**, must be taped to 8 ½ x 11" paper then stapled to the Expense Reimbursement Form.
- ☐ Receipts Requirements: see below

Receipt Requirements:

Type of Expense	Receipt Required (YES)	No Receipt Required (NO)	Explanation
BUSINESS EXPENSES:			
Business phone calls, faxes, office supplies, etc	X		When over \$5.00
EXPENSES:			
Lodging (ALL types of lodging)	X		
Meals: use California rates		X	Breakfast-Actual up to \$6.00. Lunch-Actual up to \$10.00. Dinner-Actual up to \$18.00.
Incidentals		X	Actual up to \$6.00
TRANSPORTATION:			
Airfare	X		
Train	X		When the cost exceeds \$25.00
Gas for rental car	X		
Parking, taxis, shuttles, streetcars, local rapid transit, and road tolls	X		When the cost exceeds \$10.00
Rental Cars	X		

- ☐ Claims may not crossover more than one fiscal year. Submit separate claims forms when travel extends beyond one fiscal year.

What goes on a Reimbursement Form

- ☐ Claimant's information.
- ☐ All appropriate expenses (lodging, transportation, meals, mileage, etc).
- ☐ Dates and times when expense occurred.
- ☐ Location/purpose of each trip, and any additional justification required.
- ☐ Original signatures of both claimant and supervisor and, when applicable, the designated manager's signature. **All signatures must be in ink.**
- ☐ Appropriate expenditure WBS number.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. If my Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form has been misrouted or lost en route to Accounting, can I send a duplicate photocopy for payment?

Yes, however, the employee and supervisor must resign the Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form. In addition the form must indicate "RESUBMITTAL" in bold letters across the top of the form and copies of the receipts must be attached with an explanation the originals were lost en route.

2. Does my lodging receipt need to be itemized?

Yes, lodging receipt must be itemized listing all expenses (room, tax, phone call, etc.) separately. The receipt must also have a zero balance showing the payment was made.

3. If I rent a vehicle for SCAG business and will also be traveling on personal business, can I use the same rental car?

No, the rental for personal business must be under separate contract. Employees are prohibited from using the state contract rental rates. Employees wanting to retain a commercial vehicle for personal use must make prior arrangements with the vendor at the public commercial rate.

4. What happens if I lose a receipt?

In the event of a lost receipt, employees are responsible for obtaining a copy of the receipt from the vendor (a fax copy will suffice). In the few cases where a copy of a lost receipt cannot be obtained (i.e., parking), you must document in writing the circumstances beyond your control. In the absence of a receipt, the amount of the reimbursement shall be limited to the receipt requirement base amount noted in the table on page 4. For example in the absence of a receipt for parking, the refund amount shall be limited to \$10.00

CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITE ADDRESSES

Phone and Fax Numbers

Patterson Travel Phone	(916)929-3661 or 1-800-353-3565
Patterson Travel -Emergency Travel- after hours	(800) 823-9188
Patterson Travel Fax	(916)925-1509 or (916) 925-0873

Web Site and Email Addresses

View Travel Booking/Trip Status	www.viewtrip.com
Federal Rate for Out of State Lodging	www.policyworks.gov
Forms Management	www.scag.ca.gov/formbank

ATTN: State Team

RESFAX

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT

(916) 925-1509

OR

(916) 925-0873

Travel Arranger Name: _____

Instructions:

1. Consult the Sacramento Flight guide for desired flights. If you do not have desired flights in mind, you can indicate origin and destination with approximate departure and/or arrival times.
2. Indicate the desired flight(s) in the section below.
3. Fax/e-mail this request to the California Services Department at Patterson Travel.

	Airline	Dept time	Date	From	To	Car
Flight #1						
Flight #2						
Flight #3						
Flight #4						

Passenger(s): _____

State Department Name: **Southern California Association of Government**

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Hotel Request: _____